565 554 [302] [516] [195] 554 562 574 [533] [565] 565 [83] 513 [843] 582 [648] 565 [793] 871 [651]

The Imochar, on the other hand, are much more distinguished than the Imrad; their toilette is more elaborate and their bearing nobler, so that it is often easy to distinguish them from the Imrad by their more majestic carriage. They also assume a more elegant language, from which are banished vulgar expressions and words foreign to their language, brought in by slaves. This difference of appearance and language is even more perceptible among the women; they are sometimes astonishing by their grace and their refined manners. They are real great ladies, who receive in their leather tents with as much dignity as European women of good society. Moreover, they make a certain show of receiving their guests well and charm them with the melodious sounds of their violins. The qualities esteemed in a wellborn young Tuareg girl consist in knowing how to keep her tent, making a few beautiful embroidered leather articles to give to friends or to a knight waiting upon her, and knowing how to play the violin.

Outside of their trips in the desert, the Imochar spend one part of their life courting women and the other sleeping.

The mores are much looser for the Imochar than for the Imrad, bringing about late marriages and consequently unions which are most often rather unprolific. The French occupation, on the other hand, has taken away their real raison d'être as they see it, and a certain neurasthenia seems to have taken hold of them in the last few years. It would be quite regrettable to see such an original stock /Fr. race/ disappear, but faced with its inertia in adapting itself to new conditions, we cannot quite see what palliative we could bring it.

The Inislimen. -- The Inislimen make up the religious class among the Tuareg, playing the role of chaplains and marabouts /162/ and entrusted with the formation and religious education of the children.

Therefore, they occupy an important social position, quite superior to that of the Imrad. In some confederations they are exempt

565 and, second, they are dealing with a woman who submits to their
567 caprices more easily than a woman of their race and whom they can
595 change at will. Children born of these concubinages are free but are
not members of their father's class. The latter recognizes them as
[428] his, but they are morally considered slaves. However, they can
inherit from their father.

565 /171/ Tuareg women of the noble class who have relations with
833 the Iklan are discredited among their own people. But the case is
568 not very rare, it seems, particularly since a legend maintains that
[842] the relations between Imochar women and captives are sterile.

667 The Iklan have very corrupt mores and practice pederasty and
[838 other vices. To steal and lie is instinctive for them, defects found
679] for that matter in most of the Sudanese Negroes.

Thus, when they keep goats in the pasture, they are accustomed
[272] to sucking them. Therefore, in some camps they never receive any
milk since it is rightfully presumed that they have served themselves
304 first. Some masters, to protect themselves from these thefts, do not
234] hesitate to padlock the mouths of the herdsmen by perforating their
lips. A few years ago, there was still an old woman in the Ahaggar
who had suffered this mutilation.

They live very familiarly with their masters, and some have
deserved their confidence, either by their intelligence or by their
[644] courage during raids. The former amenokal of the Ahaggar, Moussa
ag Amastan, was always accompanied by his Negro Chernach, and
the feats of war that they accomplished together are still the object
of the most marvelous tales during camp nights.

567 A slave may ask to change masters when he is mistreated or
685 when he hopes for more advantages. Since the Tuareg generally
does not want to be separated from his slave with no recompense,
the slave resorts to a subterfuge which consists in cutting off the ear
of an animal from the herd of the master to whom he wishes
henceforth to belong, or committing some other depredation of the
same sort. This offense brings about a right of life or death over the
slave who commits it, on the part of the injured party. In practice,
according to the accepted custom, this slave automatically becomes

517 may do this with more or less finesse, but his inspiration will stop there. Only work in leather and wood are definitely the achievement of the Ihaggaren, for they derive from ancient needs and the techniques have been preserved in their hands and not in those of the Enaden.

/282/ Book VI

Social Life

Ancient Cults, Religions, and Beliefs of the Tuareg

Chapter 1

Social Life

842 We are now going to observe the Tuareg in the details of their social life.

Birth. -- When young people are married, it is seldom that the bonds of marriage are not soon strengthened by the birth of a child. [586] It is very bad form for a young couple not to have a child, and sterility of one of the partners is often a cause for divorce.

843 The pregnant Tuareg woman continues to see to the household tasks, surrounded by the respect of her associates.

844 When the time for delivery approaches, the woman has herself taken to her parents' camp, if she is not there already, for she will give birth in her husband's camp only in case of absolute necessity.

A tent is set up where the woman is installed. She is usually assisted by a midwife who massages her belly and makes sure that

844 the child is in a good position; she also rolls her on the ground to put the child in place if need be, but she never makes a vaginal exploration.

845 If the birth does not go normally, the midwife may ask the [756] marabout's help. The latter comes and stands outside the tent, giving verbal advice but never intervening personally; he cannot go near the parturient woman.

844 To give birth the woman squats down on her knees and braces herself on the center stake of the tent. Generally /283/ the baby falls on a layer of fine sand which has been prepared for that purpose. The midwife immediately cuts the umbilical cord, washes the baby in warm water, and makes him cry by pinching him to make sure he is alive. Then the mother takes him, puts a bit of her milk in [856] his nostrils, stretches his nose so that it will be long and narrow, and presses his head between her hands to give it an elongated shape. [174] This custom is certainly a vestige of cranial deformation, which is no longer practiced among the Tuareg but which was formerly common among the Egyptians.

As soon as the father learns of the birth of the baby, he has a sheep butchered and sends it to the wife's camp. The sheep is meant 846 to feed her and the people who have assisted her. The woman is made to absorb a great deal of meat bouillon. Sometimes the new mother gets up two or three days after confinement.

851 The birth of a boy is welcomed with more joy than that of a girl. [842] In the first case, all the people, men and women, come to con- [852] gratulate the mother, but if it is a girl only the women come to see her. During this visit the women often put yellow ocher under [751] their eyes and around their mouths to keep away the bad genii which are always supposed to prowl around in tents where a newborn baby has just arrived.

846 On the seventh day after the birth, the woman returns to her husband's camp, accompanied by the women of her family and her brothers, if she has any. The father then sees his child for the first time.

551 not bring about any substitution of names for either sex. If the father's name is Mohamed, one would say Anaba ag (son of) Mohamed, or Chékou oult (daughter of) Mohamed. Nominal filiation is therefore patrilinear.

Nicknames are numerous in the Ahaggar. Father de Foucauld tells us that "they are sometimes proper names of persons different from the one already received, sometimes names recalling a physical peculiarity or an event, sometimes meaningless names. A great many people have no nicknames. Among those who do have them, some accept them and others are insulted by them. Sometimes nicknames are temporary, known only to a few intimate friends and quickly forgotten. Sometimes they become so attached to the person that he is never referred to in any other way and his real name falls into oblivion." (2)

2. Dictionnaire abrégé Touareg-Français des noms propres /Short Tuareg-French Dictionary of Proper Names/, p. xv.

•842 Conception and nursing. -- As for conception, the Tuareg see in it nothing but the will of God. However, they also establish the causal relationship of sexual intercourse and do not discuss the possibility that a woman can conceive without contact with a man. The existence and role of spermatozoa are unknown, but the Tuareg /285/ recognize the action of the seminal liquid and women practice spraying as a contraceptive measure. Professor [114] Gautier has even spoken of a primitive douche. This apparatus is not known by Tuareg women, and Gautier surely must have confused it with the enema.

841 Menstruation (iba-n-amoud) begins between the ages of thirteen [145] and fifteen years for Tuareg girls and causes them great fright. While they are indisposed they make no intimate toilet and often take no precautions to absorb the flow, which spots their clothing. [783] They also abstain from making prayers as if they were in a state of impurity.

841 The cessation of the menses during pregnancy is interpreted
843 discerningly, that is, that the baby is fed by the discharge and rejects the waste products from it at birth (placenta).

When a woman cannot have a child, her husband goes to find
842 a marabout who sells him an amulet which the woman must wear
[788] next to her skin. The wife, for her part, goes to pray near old
[782] tombs known to be those of venerated people. She asks God's
769 pardon for her faults and asks death to intercede for her with the creator. If the woman conceives, the husband takes the marabout
[431] an offering which sometimes consists of as much as several head of livestock.

After confinement the wife has no sexual relations with her
846 husband for a month and ten days. On the fortieth day the husband
834 makes his wife a present of sandals and new clothing.
431

Nursing lasts on the average from two to two and one-half
862 years. Boys, however, are weaned six months later than girls, for they are more fragile, it seems, and need stronger food.

854 In camp the young child is placed on a cushion, lying on his stomach, and kept in place by a cloth band which passes over his loins and ties under the cushion. His wrists are also sometimes attached. Sometimes a wooden frame made of arches is placed over him; it holds up cloths and protects him from flies, light,
[184] and sandstorms, all at the same time. The Ioullimmiden Tuareg use little cradles which are hooked to the arches of the tent.

At moving time the mother carries her child on her back or
[171] on her hip, held by a loincloth knotted over the breasts. This method, also used by the Sudanese, does not seem to disturb the
[853] child, in spite of the /286/ mother's movements, which are sometimes quite sudden. If he cries, she nurses him until all the milk is gone; there is no question of hours or measure for feedings.

The long nursing period as well as the carrying system causes
826 the woman's breasts to sag rapidly after the first child. For the
85[Tuareg, however, aesthetics count less than motherhood, which
517 ennobles the woman.

836 pure until her marriage," said Dr. Vermale elsewhere. "Those are sentiments which the Tuareg do not understand. Thus, as soon as she is nubile, she goes to the ohal and it is not long before she is deflowered. Virginity does not exist and has no representative value in the eyes of the Tuareg." (2) Indeed, the women are

2. Op. cit., p. 171.

more or less easy. Some give themselves to the first comer; others grant their favors to only a small group of friends. To grant them [839 577] only to a single person, however, would be judged in very bad taste and a sign of perversion.

[554] No one finds fault with their free mores, on the condition that they let themselves be courted only by men of a social condition equal to their own. Some women let themselves be courted by slaves and that is considered a shame for them.

•842 /290/ One may be astonished that unwed mothers are not more numerous with such dissolute mores. Contraception is com- [833] monly used, and, as Dr. Foley said, effusio seminis inter crura is probably the frequent conclusion of the nocturnal rendezvous after the ahal. (1) These restrictive measures must not be unre-

1. Moeurs et médecine des Touaregs de l'Ahaggar /Ahaggar Tuareg Mores and Medicine/, p. 56.

lated to the low birth rate of the Tuareg, and it is quite possible that the married Tuareg woman continues to practice them.

847 Bearing children out of wedlock and bastardy (agama) are the [847] object of public discredit. The Tuareg rarely practice abortion, but infanticides used to be quite numerous, and no one thought of being offended by them. When a woman finds herself pregnant

4: Benhazera--1 G-5 (1905) 1908 MS25 Tuareg MS25
Hoggar

Book One

The Tuareg in their Private and Public Life

Part One

The Tuareg in their Private Life

Chapter I

Birth. Childhood

In Tamashek, birth is called "tiouit" ⵜⵉⵡⵉⵜ. There is no special observance to note concerning the birth of a child among the Tuareg. However, there is greater joy if it is a boy. People come to congratulate the parents and, seven days later, the latter serve a more or less lavish feast, depending on their means, the feast being preceded by the recitation of the "fatiha" (first sura of the Koran). Those present who do not know Arabic limit themselves during this recitation to holding their open hands together like a book. It is on this day that the child is given its name.

On this subject, I think I should note that especially among the Kel R'ela (a noble tribe of the Ahaggar), many children were given the names of wild beasts or animals.

Examples of Men's Names

Amellal, addax, meha /?/
Abeggui, jackal
Amayas, cheetah
Akhou, wild animal